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SKETCH
OF THE
MILITARY SYSTEM
OF FRANCE,
COMPRISING SOME OBSERVATION ON
THE CHARACTER AND DESIGNS
OF
THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT;
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROBABLE DURATION OF
FRENCH POWER.

ARMATI TERRAM EXERCENT, SEMPERQUE RECENTES,
CONVECTARE JUVAT PRÆDAS ET VIVERE RAPTO.

VIRGIL.

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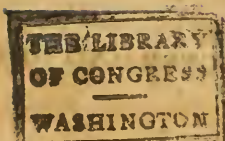
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ADVERTISEMENT,

BY THE PUBLISHER.

THE following essay was written about the close of the year eighteen hundred and ten; some curtailments and additions were made in May, eighteen hundred and eleven. Although the subject of which it treats, has been already discussed by very able writers, yet the publisher is induced to believe, that this pamphlet will be found to be both instructive and interesting. It appears to be the production of a gentleman who has thought much on "the weighty matters of state" and knows how to communicate his thoughts with energy and correctness. It is presumed it will not be improper to add, that in so critical a period as the present, works not written under the influence of sectarian or factious politics, taking liberal and extensive views of the present state of affairs in Europe, with suitable deductions therefrom, cannot be uninteresting to the American reader, and may contribute to the public weal.

As the author's residence is remote from the press, and he had no opportunity of examining the proof-sheets, the publisher hopes the reader will excuse any errata he may discover.

SKETCH OF THE

Military System of France, &c.

THE history of all ages exhibits no series of events, rapidly succeeding, and growing out of each other, so interesting, so singular, and so important to the human race, as that, which, during the last twenty years, has been displayed on the theatre of Europe. To all the purposes of political experience, the politicians and statesmen of the present age have already lived through many centuries. The lessons of political wisdom need no longer be sought in the voluminous histories of other times; they have all been repeated, they have all been impressed on the minds of wise and reflecting men, and with all the charms of novelty to recommend them, in this age of marvellous events.

The sudden and enormous increase of the power of France, within the last few years, has amazed and confounded the wisest and best-informed politicians. On the continent of Asia, abounding in extensive plains, with but few na-

tural impediments to the progress of a conqueror, and peopled for the most part, by semi-barbarous slaves, living under the worst possible forms of government, conquests, as rapid and extensive as those of France have been by no means infrequent. The slaves of an Asiatic despot have but few motives, and of course but little inclination, to resist the arms of an invader. It is, to them, a matter of small importance, whether their rights shall be trampled on by a native or a foreign tyrant. But that the rough and mountainous regions of Europe, peopled by a race of men at once civilized and warlike, living, for the most part contentedly, under governments, some of them free, and the rest too well acquainted with their real interests to tyrannize over their subjects, should fall so easy a prey to the sword of a conqueror, that the apparently strong and well-compacted monarchies and republics of that quarter of the globe should be so easily and so quickly overturned, would a few years since have been considered beyond the verge of possibility. Never, in any age before, have the warlike nations of that continent been subdued in such rapid succession; never, before, has ambition there advanced, with such giant strides, towards the attainment of its ends; never, before, has so great a fabric of power been there so suddenly reared.

An inquiry into the causes of this sudden and portentous increase of the power of France, would possess, at this time, peculiar interest ; inasmuch as that power is still in its zenith, and still threatens to prostrate the nations which yet retain their independence. Such an inquiry, in its fullest extent, the writer of these pages would gladly institute, were he not persuaded that the development of all those causes would be an undertaking too great for his talents, his knowledge and his leisure. He attempts not a work so far beyond his power.

But because his powers are not competent to the attainment of a great object, he will not, therefore, leave a small one unattempted. The maxim "*Aut Cæsar, aut nullus,*" in which it is hard to say whether arrogance or indolence predominates, shall not in this case, be the rule of his conduct. Believing the peculiar military system of France to be one among the leading causes of her sudden aggrandizement, he will endeavour, with the powerful aid of one of the best writers whom this age and country have produced,* to develop the organization, structure and character of that terrible engine of conquest ; and in doing so will make such remarks

* Mr. Walsh, who is generally understood to be the author of the article in the Edinburgh Review, from which copious extracts will by and by be made.

on the "genius and dispositions" of the government of France as the subject may suggest. He will then proceed to inquire into the probable duration of that power, which has "so fatally triumphed over the liberties of Europe;" which already extends its views of conquest to the remotest quarters of the globe; which charms the nations to destruction with its deceitful smiles, or terrifies them with its frowns.

Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans.---LUCRET.

In pursuing this latter inquiry, he will suggest other causes which have contributed to elevate revolutionary France to that "bad eminence" on which she stands.

From the establishment of the feudal monarchies in Europe until towards the commencement of the thirteenth century, the feudal militia was the only species of military force employed by the states of that continent. But in the lapse of seven centuries, a change in the manners of the European nations rendered necessary a corresponding change in the prevailing military system. The people were weary of the oppressions and vexations which it inflicted on them; the prince, of its inadequacy to the production of an efficient military force. By general consent

pecuniary grants* from the people to the prince were substituted for the render of military services, and armies of mercenaries, kept up in time of war, but disbanded at the return of peace, supplied the place of the feudal militia. Standing armies were, in that age, unknown in Europe. When the turbulent passions which produce violence and bloodshed among men, had been soothed by the triumphant, or quelled by the disastrous issue of a conflict, the shattered remnants of war were disbanded, the soldier whom the sword had spared, was restored to his family and his friends ; the state was no longer oppressed with the burthen of his maintenance. A new state of things was now to arise, produced by the employment of mercenary armies instead of the feudal militia.

In the feudal monarchies the authority of the prince was confined within bounds so ex-

* It is worthy of remark, that these grants of money, from the people to the prince, in lieu of military services, were the commencement of that system of taxation, which, in modern Europe, has been carried to such excess. From the close of the fifth century, till the commencement of the thirteenth, the sovereigns of Europe derived scarcely any revenue from their subjects by taxation. Their ordinary revenue consisted of the rents of the royal domains, of the profits arising from the custody of the temporalities of the church, and of the lands of their military wards, and of several other small particulars, all which together defrayed the ordinary expenses of the government. In time of war, the armies were raised, equipped and supported in the field at the expense of the individuals who composed them.

ceedingly narrow, that he possessed little more than the shadow of sovereignty. He was, indeed, the commander of the army during war; but in time of peace he possessed the name only, not the power of a king. But though his power was small, the liberty of the great body of his subjects was not proportionally great; for they were oppressed, insulted and trampled on by an arrogant nobility. The feudal states, though they bore the name of monarchies, were essentially oligarchies of the very worst description, in which the nobles tyrannized over the people, and insulted, and not infrequently imprisoned the king, with absolute impunity.— This they were enabled to do by the peculiar constitution of those states, which gave them the *immediate* command of almost the whole military force:* for it is a maxim which applies to all governments whatever, that the department which controls the military force does, in effect, possess the sovereign power. In the feudal states the prince could not summon the great body of the military tenants to arms, but through the medium of the nobility, whose immediate vassals they were. The power which the haughty barons thus possessed, of withholding military

* The military tenants of the domains of the crown were immediately under the control of the prince; but these were few in number, compared with the whole mass of the military population.

aid from the crown, was perverted to the worst of purposes : the authority of the prince and of the laws was openly set at defiance ; the people were oppressed by exactions of every sort ; the state was torn in pieces by intestine commotions.

But when the system of granting pecuniary supplies to the crown, in lieu of military services, had become firmly established, a new state of things was quickly produced. The military force which these grants enabled the prince to raise, was employed, not in foreign wars only, but in taming the rebellious spirit of the nobles, and in augmenting the power of the crown, The nobles, destitute of union among themselves, and overwhelmed by the inveterate hatred of the people, were compelled to surrender the power which they had so grossly abused ; and the people beheld with joy unfeigned, the establishment of the regal authority, on the ruins of oligarchick tyranny. Justly regarding the dominion of one more tolerable than that of a thousand tyrants, they zealously co-operated with the prince in all his efforts.

The monarchs of Europe, having once tasted the sweets of power, conferred on them by the possession of a military force exclusively their own, began to search out pretexts for giving permanency to this potent engine of state.

Charles the seventh, of France, favoured by circumstances, and urged on by a despotic temper, was the prince who led the way in this new and momentous experiment. During the reign of his predecessor, Charles the sixth, or rather during the reign of those bloody factions which the imbecility of that monarch had permitted to grow up in his kingdom, the English, under their gallant and accomplished monarch, Henry the fifth, invaded the territory of France. Debilitated by inveterate factions, the French monarchy would have sunk under the furious assaults of its invaders, had not the death of the feeble Charles, and of his formidable opponent Henry, which occurred nearly at the same time, given a new and favourable turn to its affairs. The dauphin, now Charles the seventh, aroused by these propitious events from a despair which had well nigh proved fatal to the independence of his country, erected a standard around which loyalty might rally, and quickly saw himself at the head of all the "choice-drawn" cavaliers of his kingdom. A long and furious conflict with the English, gave him undisputed possession of the throne of his ancestors. Bred up in camps, and accustomed from his early youth until the prime of manhood, to the stern severity of military law, he carried the spirit of despotism from the field to the cabinet. Having seen and felt

the evils which the tax administration of his father had produced, he resolved to hold with a stern and vigorous grasp the sceptre which his persevering valor had wrested from a foreign dynasty : he resolved, in short, to rule with despotic sway, both the nobility and the people. Full of this dark and gloomy project, he chose his measures with that promptness and decision, and executed them with that energy, which he had learnt amid the din of arms and in the school of adversity. The sword, it has been truly observed, is a machine of amazing power, but withal so simple in its mode of operation, that it may be employed successfully by the most rude and unskilful artist ; much more by the designing and sagacious Charles. The situation of France at the close of the war, overrun with robbers and assassins, rendered the employment of a large military force by the government, for some time after the peace, a measure of apparent necessity. The people were told, that a military force was essential to the protection of their lives and property against the attempts of lawless freebooters, and they foolishly swallowed the bait. Nine thousand veteran soldiers, the flower of his army, were retained in the service by Charles, and their number, throughout the whole of his reign, was gradually augmented. The effects of this moment-

ous change were quickly seen, in the virtual abolition of the states general, in the publication of arbitrary edicts, in a word, in the total prostration of all the powers of the state before the throne of the monarch. The example of Charles found an imitator in each of the princes of the continent.

Thus were standing armies, in Europe, the offspring of the spirit of despotism, and, with true filial regard, they have cherished and supported the parent that produced them.

The general introduction of standing armies constitutes an important era in the history of Europe. To this we may refer the rapid growth of arbitrary power in that quarter of the globe—the supernatural energy with which wars have, since that period, been waged—the enormous increase of taxation—and, finally, the adoption of the pernicious system of loans, which has enabled the governments of Europe to go to war with their whole capital—to waste the resources of the present, and encroach upon those of future generations. To this it is owing, that Europe has been converted into an immense entrenched camp, in which nothing is heard but the din of arms; in which nothing is seen but blood, slaughter, and confusion.

From the year one thousand four hundred and forty-four, the era of this momentous change

in the military system of France, until the present day, a standing army has been regularly kept up in that country : and from that period until the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, its ranks were uniformly, even on the greatest emergencies, filled by voluntary enlistment.

At the last mentioned period, the system of voluntary enlistment was exchanged for that of compulsory levy. In order fully to explain the motives of this change, and the means by which it was effected, it will be necessary to make some observations concerning that terrible revolution which was then feeding on the vitals of France, and which turning its force outward, soon after deluged Europe with blood and desolated its fairest regions.

For more than two hundred years before the French revolution, the people of France had lived contentedly under a government, which, though absolute in its form, was comparatively mild in its administration. The evils of despotism were greatly alleviated in France by the loyalty of the people, by the affection which they felt for their monarchs, and by the reciprocal regard which the latter could not forbear entertaining for subjects who obeyed them with such zeal, such alacrity, such "proud humility," and who were so much devoted to their glory. But these, the

happiest days of modern France, were soon to pass away. Towards the close of the eighteenth century the demon of indiscriminating innovation, wearing the garb and appearance of the beneficent genius of reform, entered that devoted country, and gained the hearts of the people. The perfectibility of human nature, the absolute equality of men, the facility with which free governments might be established on the ruins of despotism, if the nations would but "*will it.*" These were the splendid theories which were held up to their view ; these were the "visions of glory" which glared on their aching sight. The nation was electrified ; every man was instantly converted into a legislator, and was miraculously gifted with the power, not only of demonstrating the absurdity of all established principles in government, in religion and in morality, but of prescribing fundamental laws to a mighty empire. The antique tree of despotism, whose widely-extended and interwoven branches, while they protected them from the storm and the tempest, had chilled them with a withering shade, and intercepted the genial rays of the sun, was rooted up and delivered to the flames by the enthusiasm of the people of France : they fondly expected that a tree of liberty would flourish in its place. Alas ! no:—

for the soil had been steeped in the blood, and watered with the tears of innocence.

After divesting their king of his absolute power, and totally prostrating all the established institutions of the state, they fabricated a constitution so absurd, so weak, so inconsistent with itself and common sense, that discerning men instantly pronounced it to be, what it certainly was, a mere temporary expedient, intended by the jacobins who framed it to last only until their schemes for the total destruction of royalty should be more thoroughly matured.

The jacobin society, self-created in one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine, for the advancement of a revolution, by which its members hoped to attain dignity, wealth and power, encreased with the troubles of which it was the nefarious author. In the commencement of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety two the jacobins were the predominant party in the state. The principal club, in Paris, presided over and corresponded directly, with eleven hundred similarly organized societies in the departments ; and each of these had under its control a circle of inferior clubs ; so that the whole number exceeded fifteen thousand. By means of these societies the influence of the jacobins was extended over the whole territory of France. They had, ere this, attained to such strength in

the national assembly, as to the able, with the assistance of their armed adherents in the galleries, to enforce the adoption of any measure, however villainous and detestable ; and they now proceeded to the full exercise of their powers.

It was they who raised the storm in which the bark of royalty foundered, and the prosperity of the nation was wrecked ; who converted the spirit of innovation into a thirst for blood and a furious love of anarchy ; who worked up the revolutionary tempest, and then “ rode in the whirlwind,” and directed the fury of the storm ; pointed its bolts against the breast of innocence, and consumed, with its lightning, as well the cottage of the peasant as the palace of the noble.

Under the domination of this infernal faction, the members of which were perpetually declaiming about the rights of man, while they habitually trampled the most sacred of them under foot—unhappy France, drenched with the blood of her children, suffered calamities which language is too poor to describe. The history of those times will be considered by posterity as a libel on human nature : its credulity will be staggered by the relation of enormities, which, if they had not been perpetrated could not have been conceived possible. In those

days of tremendous anarchy and bloody misrule, in that furious conflict of all the diabolical passions, the ties of kindred, of affinity, of friendship and of social love were broken. Robbery, rape and murder are words which convey no adequate idea of the crimes which indelibly stained the annals of revolutionary France.*

But I have not imposed upon myself the hateful task of detailing the atrocities of the jacobins, and I regret having touched on a subject so full of dreadful import.

Some months before the insurrection of the tenth of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety two, which gave the *coup de grace* to the Bourbon dynasty in France, the jacobins had involved their country in a war with Austria. The pretext for the declaration of war, which was made in April, '92, was the alleged treaty of Pilnitz, and the permission given to the emigrants, assembled at Coblenz, to form themselves into a military corps. This treaty of Pilnitz is stated, by those who believe in its existence, to have been an agreement between the emperor Leopold, and the kings of Prussia and

* "Cruelties for which there did not exist a name in any language, until their perpetrators invented, by way of ironical pleasantry, names which will eternize their infamy and astonish posterity ; such as Noyades, Baignades, Deportation, Vertical deportation, Republican marriage, &c."

Playfair's "*Hist. of Jacobinism*," vol. 1, p. 25, *in press*

Sardinia “to maintain the liberty of Louis the sixteenth, and the independence of other kingdoms.”* But it requires no extraordinary degree of sagacity to discern other and more adequate motives for the conduct of the jacobins, in declaring war against Austria. Having possessed themselves of the sovereign authority in France, they sought, by involving their country in war, to augment their power, and render it permanent. While they remained at peace with foreign states they dreaded an insurrection of the people against their tyrannical sway. A war, by placing at their disposal an immense military force, would enable them to crush every insurrection, and would render them entirely independent of the popular will. The event demonstrated the correctness of their calculations ; for when several of the departments, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety three, driven to desperation by the tyranny of the jacobin government, took up arms against it, they were overwhelmed by an immense military force ; their towns and villages were razed to the ground, and half the population of the country exterminated. Never, before, had rebellion been so cruelly chastised.

But the preservation of these powers by means of a military force, was not the only mo-

* Playfair’s “History of Jacobinism,” vol. 1, p. 347.

tive of the jacobins for declaring war against Austria :—they were Frenchmen—and they inherited from their fathers an insatiable thirst for conquest. They were possessed of means incomparatively greater than those with which Louis the fourteenth had attempted the subjugation of Europe, and they were vain enough to believe that they could apply them with far greater ability. No government indeed, ancient or modern, ever possessed means, moral and physical, equal to those which were now at their disposal. The blind enthusiasm of a great portion of the people and the revolutionary energy of the government were, of themselves, sufficient to render France more formidable to her neighbours than she had been in any age before :—but these were not the only advantages she possessed over the other European states.

Her pecuniary means were almost unlimited. The national assembly, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, perceiving that the great objects of their elections, the replenishment of the treasury, and the restoration of order to the finances, were farther than ever from being obtained, resorted to an expedient which the *unjust* and tyrannical government whose abuses they were pretending to correct, would not have dared even to suggest. They enacted a law declaring all the landed estates of

the clergy, to be national property.* On the credit of the landed capital thus honorably acquired, they issued government bills (assignats) to an almost incredible amount.† The circulation of this new species of money was enforced by every sanction which the government

* They pretended to give to the clergy a pecuniary compensation for their services, in lieu of the lands of which they deprived them. But this was merely a cloak for their iniquity. The enjoyment of the stipend allowed by the government was clogged with conditions to which no conscientious Roman Catholic priest could assent. Nine tenths of them accordingly refused to comply ; these were denominated non-jurors, and after being persecuted in the most cruel manner, were at length banished.

† Ramel, in his "History of the finances of the republic," states the amount of the assignats which were issued to be forty thousand millions of francs, equivalent to two thousand millions sterling, or nearly nine thousand millions of dollars ! When the directoral government, in 1795, declared itself unable to redeem them and refused to make any sort of compromise with the holders, the assignats bore the current value of one six hundred and sixty-sixth part of their nominal amount ! and yet the depreciation was not so rapid as might have been expected ; for Arthur Young, esq. in his "Tour through France," vol. 1. pa. 520, says, "In September 1790, four hundred millions of assignats were in circulation ; but the discount at Bordeaux *never* exceeded *ten*, at Paris *six* per cent. And in May 1791, after many hundred millions more were issued, the discount was from seven to ten per cent." If any further evidence be wanted of the amazing extent, at the commencement of the revolution, of the pecuniary resources of France, it may be found in the fact that "the republic maintained fourteen different armies. The troops paid were estimated at 1,400,000. The fronts of the troops defending her on the east, occupied a line of 500 leagues, &c. Forty sous were paid, for sometime, to the individuals who frequented the popular societies. The theatres of Paris were hired to give gratuitous exhibitions."—*Ramel*.

could devise. It was the representative, not of specie, (as are bank bills in the United States) but of land; and as the sales of the estates of the clergy commenced about the same time that the assignats were issued, they were, at that time, convertible into the commodity which they represented. This conferred upon them some real value, and the irresistible mandate of a revolutionary government gave them at first the currency of specie.

But this was not the only extraordinary resource of the revolutionay government. The sale of the confiscated property of the emigrants, real and personal, produced in the course of the revolution, nearly five hundred millions of dollars. In December, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, Mr. Pitt asserted on the floor of the house of commons, that three hundred and twenty millions sterling, was the price which France had paid within two years, for the conquests she had made.* If such were her expenditures, how great must have been her resources.

But whether the revolutionary government was encouraged by the possession of means so extensive, or prompted by ambition, or whatever may have been its motives for commencing the

* "Life of William Pitt," Anon. pa. 97.

war which has ever since been waged against the liberties of Europe, it is certain, that it derived from the existence of that war a pretext for adopting the system of compulsive military levy.

It was in the month of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety two, that the national assembly laid the foundation of the present military system of France, by declaring the country in danger, and ordering the levy *en masse* to be made. But though the principle of compulsory levy was then adopted, and has ever since been acted upon, under different modifications, no regular permanent system was formed until the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety eight, when the law of the conscription was enacted by the directorial government.

“The directorial plan,” says the Edinburgh Review “is attributed to Carnot, who, in the revolutionary language, is said ‘to have organized victory in the French armies.’ Its author, who was enthusiastically devoted to the forms of antiquity, and still preserves, within the rays of the imperial purple, all the simplicity of ancient manners, found his model in the conscription of the Roman republic, which made every citizen a soldier, before the age of forty six, in the annual levies, which admitted of no exception, and in the peremptory orders issued by their consuls to the magistrates of Italy, specifying the

number of troops required, and the place of their assemblage.”*

The writer of these pages at first intended to trace the existing military system of France from its source, through all its doublings and meanders, through all its various changes and modifications, until it attained its present state of horrible perfection. Such an investigation would have exhibited an instructive view of the wanton caprices, of the depraved ingenuity, of the uniform disregard, as well, of the most sacred rights of men, as of the cries of suffering humanity, which amid all the storms of the revolution, from the downfall of the Bourbons to the present era, have been displayed by each of the successive governments of France. But discovering that materials for so extensive an investigation were not within his reach, he was obliged to contract his plan, and content himself with displaying *the system of conscription as it is*. And here he is happy to avail himself of the aid of an abler pen than his own. Possessing no other knowledge of the system of conscription than that which he derives from a very able analysis of a work† published in Paris,

* The reader is referred to the appendix for a more detailed account of the military system of ancient Rome, than that here given.

† Code de la Conscription, ou Recueil Chronologique des lois et des arrêtes du gouvernement, des decrets imperiaux

in one thousand eight hundred and six, with which the Edinburgh Reviewers have favoured the literary world, he deems it more becoming a mere tyro in letters, to exhibit their detail in their own clear and forcible language, than to invest their ideas in his own inferior style. He reserves for himself the task of making such observations, comments and practical deductions as fall within the scope of his plan. The ability with which the few following pages are written will evince the correctness of the decision which he has made.

“That our readers may the better understand our abstract of the laws on the conscription, it is proper to premise, that France is divided into about thirty military governments, subject to a general of division and his staff, to which commissaries are attached, as executive officers. The civil division consists of one hundred and twenty two departments ; twenty four of which have been acquired since the overthrow of the monarchy, exclusive of Tuscany, not included in any part of this statement. The departments are divided into districts or *arrondissements*, from three to five in number ; the *arrondissements* into cantons, and the cantons into municipalities,

relatives à la levée des conscrits, à leur remplacement, aux dispenses de service, &c. depuis l'an 6, jusques et compris l'an 14.”

amounting to about fifty five thousand. Each department is governed by a prefect and his council, composed of a commissary of police, a mayor and certain inspectors, denominated counsellors of prefecture. The district or *arrondissement*, by a subprefect and his council, of a similar foundation. The cantons and municipalities are under the supervision of an administration, composed of the civil authorities, with a president at their head. A mayor, a commissary of police and two officers of the government, styled adjuncts, are allotted to every division, having a population above five thousand souls. These several authorities are in strict subordination to each other, and at the controul of the prefects and subprefects; who themselves are charged with a weighty and inflexible responsibility, as to the military levies."

"The conscription was first published in the form of a general law, by the council of ancients, in the year 1798, and has since undergone some slight modifications."

By the law of the directory, all Frenchmen are pronounced soldiers; and when the *country is declared in danger*, are liable to be summoned to its defence. In any other conjuncture "*the wants of the army are relieved by the conscription*," and the requisite number of conscripts is determined by the senate or legislative body, at

the suggestion of the executive government. The law which limits the whole number, regulates, at the same time, the contingent of each department, proportionally to its population. Within eight days after publication, the prefect distributes this contingent among the districts, by the same rule ; and the subprefect among the cantons and municipalities. All Frenchmen *between the full age of twenty and twenty five complete*, are liable to the conscription. They are each year thrown into five classes ; the first of which consists of those who have completed their twentieth year on the 1st. vendemaire, or 16th. of September preceding ; the second of those who, at the same period, have terminated their twenty first year, and so on, in the order of seniority. Thus, the conscript, who has attained the full age of twenty five, remains liable, until the month and day just mentioned. The municipal administrations are bound to prepare lists, framed from the registers of births, and from common notoriety, which particularize the name, domicile, stature, &c. of all the individuals subject to the conscription, within their jurisdiction. The same individuals are also bound to enrol themselves, with a similar specification, at the office of the municipality, as soon as the law is published. Both lists are then transmitted to the prefects, who are responsible for their

accuracy, and who immediately consign them over to the "minister of war."

Eight days are allotted to the preparation of the lists. The conscripts are then assembled in each canton, and examined by the administration, or by a special commission, created *ad hoc* by the prefect. The merits of all pleas of exemption are scrutinized at these meetings. Such as plead infirmities, if able to attend, are examined on the spot ; and if not, are visited at their dwellings, by "the inspectors and health officers." The latter, generally physicians in the army, are not selected until the moment of the examination ; and, to obviate collusion, must belong to a district, different from that of the conscript. The final decision of all cases of exemption is referred to a commission of higher resort, composed of the prefect, the general officers and commissaries of the department. When the claims are disposed of, lists are formed of those who are judged competent to serve, whether present or absent ; and the subprefect then proceeds to the drawing or designation, by lot, of such as are to constitute the quota of the district. Tickets, regularly numbered, to the amount of the names on the list, are publicly deposited in an urn, and indiscriminately drawn out by the conscripts or their friends. The lot falls upon those who draw the numbers below

the amount of the quota. The higher numbers, drawn by the rest, are annexed to their names, in order that they may be forthcoming in their orders, should any casualty disable their predecessors. Absentees, not presenting themselves within a month after the drawing, are declared refractory, proclaimed throughout the empire, and pursued as deserters."

"These are the conscripts of "*the actual service*." But, besides these, the law requires *an equal number*, to form what is termed, in contradistinction, the conscription of "*the reserve*." The members of the reserve are nominated with the same formalities, *to march only in cases of emergency*; are regularly organized, and carefully disciplined, within their own departments, from which they are not suffered to absent themselves. A third body is then created, of *supplemental conscripts*, equal in number to one fourth of the whole contingent, and destined to fill up the vacancies which may be occasioned, before junction at head-quarters, by death, desertion or other causes. If the supplement should not be adequate to this purpose, the reserve supplies its place; and, at all events, no deficiency is permitted, as each canton is accountable for its full assessment. No Frenchman, under the age of thirty, can travel through the empire, or hold any situation under govern-

ment, or serve in any public office, unless he can produce a certificate, duly authenticated, attesting that he has discharged his liability to the conscription.

“All authorities are bound *solidum* and under the severest sanctions, to observe that the conscripts are assembled, reviewed, and dismissed to their destination without delay. They are marched *under an escort* of gendarmerie, and *in bodies strictly limited to the number of one hundred*; to various quarters or *depots*, throughout the empire, and there first supplied with arms and clothing. They are never permitted to exist in separate battalions, but are individually (*nominativement*) draughted into, or scattered through distinct corps of the pre-existing army, to which they are marched, in exceedingly small detachments, and sometimes from an astonishing distance.”

Dispensations are given by the higher military tribunal of the prefect; and are provisional or definite, according to the nature of the disability pleaded. For all diseases pronounced curable, the discharge is but temporary. The infirmities which tend to disqualify, are discriminated with the nicest care, and accompanied by copious scientific explanations. The minister of war reviews the decisions of this tribunal; and if a suspicion of partiality arise, orders

the medical inquiry to be renewed. The party *released* pays an indemnity to the government, the amount of which is proportioned, by the perfect, to his taxes, or those of his parents. No exceptions were originally allowed to the law "of active service;" but at this moment, the eldest brother of an orphan family, the only son of a widow, or of a labourer above the age of seventy, or one who has a brother in the active service, may on soliciting the indulgence, be transferred to the reserve. The same privilege is accorded to those, who have taken the order of sub-deacon in the ecclesiastical seminaries. *Parents continue responsible for their absent children, until they can produce an official attestation of their death.*

"The directory admitted of no substitution; but the serverity of this principle is now relaxed in favour of such as are adjudged "*incapable of sustaining the fatigues of war,*" or, "whose labours and studies *are deemed* more useful to the state than their military services."^{*}

Proxies are therefore received only *ad libitum*, not as a matter of right; and never without a special mandate from the minister of war.

* In the year 1798 the law was repealed which exempted married persons from the conscription. Depera, and with him Malthus, attributed the increased proportion of births anterior to that period, to premature marriages, to avoid the military levies.—*Malthus B. 2, C. 6.*

The conscript furnishes a sum of about £5, (100 francs) for the equipment of his substitute, who must be *between the ages of twenty five and forty, of the middle size at least, of a robust constitution, of a good character ; certified by his municipality, and himself beyond the reach of the conscription laws.* He bears the surname of his principal, in order that the latter may be known and compelled to march, should his proxy desert, or be lost from any other cause than death, or wounds received in battle, *within the term of two years."*

"All the enacting clauses of this system are fortified by heavy denunciations against public functionaries, parents or others, who contribute to defeat or retard its operation. Any health officer or other functionary, convicted of furnishing a false certificate of infirmity, &c. is subjected to *five years imprisonment in irons.* All civil and military officers, even of the highest rank, convicted of favouring the escape, or concealing the retreat of a fugitive, are exposed to excessive fines. Conscripts detected in counterfeiting infirmities, or *mutilating themselves,* are placed "*at the disposition of the government*" for five years, to be employed in such public labours as may be judged most useful to the state. The absentees or *refractory* conscripts, whose apprehension is secured by the most minute and

efficient precautions, besides undergoing the corporal punishment entailed on their offence, are amerced in a sum of eighteen hundred francs, equivalent, from the comparative value of money in the two countries, to about one hundred and twenty pounds sterling. This sum, together with the expenses incurred in the pursuit, is levied on the real property of the father or mother, should the fugitive possess none in his own right.

“Nine garrison towns are designated, throughout the empire, as depots for the refractory conscripts. They are lodged in the citadel, subjected to a most rigid discipline, and made to work in the arsenal, or on the roads, clad in a particular uniform, with their heads closely shaved. Five years constitute the term allotted to this confinement; but it is added “that they are gradually to be drafted into the army” as they give tokens of docility and reformation. “Every conscript absenting himself twenty four hours from his depot, is punished as a deserter. A special council of war is assembled to decide upon cases of desertion. The penal sanctions are, first, death; second, the punishment of the ball (*la paine du boulet*); and third, public or hard labour.”

“The nature of the second, the punishment of the ball, merits notice. An iron ball, of eight

pounds weight, and fastened to an iron chain seven feet in length, is attached to the leg of the deserter. He, in the first instance, hears his sentence read, on his knees, and is condemned to hard labour, during ten hours daily, and in the intervals of rest, to be chained in solitary confinement. This sentence is rigorously executed, and embittered by all the external marks of ignominy, in dress and appearance. The duration of this punishment, which is ten years, is prolonged, and an additional ball fettered to the leg, in cases of contumacy, or serious disobedience. We have remarked a curious provision connected with this double delinquency. The party is solemnly interdicted, under pain of two years imprisonment in irons, from fixing himself, after he is set at liberty, *within twenty leagues of the seat of government!*

“The third class of punishment (*les travaux publics*) is exempted from the iron ball; and, in other respects, only differs from the preceding, in the length of the term, which is but three years. A fine of 1,500 francs is inseparable from all cases of desertion. Death is inflicted on the deserter to the enemy, and on him, who, in deserting from the punishment of the ball, *carries off his own arms or those of his comrades.* The punishment of the ball is adjudged to such, as escape into the interior of the empire with

their uniform, or with the effects of another ; or from the public labours which are inflicted upon those who are guilty of simple desertion into the interior. In time of war, every officer or soldier absenting himself forty-eight hours without permission, is reputed a deserter. The laws on the subject of desertion are read to the whole French army on the first Sunday of every month."

Such is the law of the conscription, as detailed in the Edinburgh review. The author then proceeds to speak of the *abuses* which render this law, terrible as it is in theory, still more monstrous in its practical operation.

" Our readers may have observed in the details of this system, a semblance of tenderness towards those persons, whose situation is apt to rouse those indignant feelings—that *insurgent* consciousness of right which undisguised oppression never fails to excite even among the most degraded of human beings. Hypocrisy is the defence of fear against just resentment, and may therefore be well entitled, not only the homage which vice offers to virtue, but the tribute which despotism pays to liberty. The provisions on the subject of the reserve, to which we particularly allude, are altogether illusory. The ostensible purpose of its creation is to supply possible deficiencies, and to assist the ar-

mies in cases of great emergency. The emergency however, has always been found to exist. "*Tyrannorum enim preces, nosti, quam, permixtæ necessitatibus,*" and the reserve is uniformly compelled to march. Not only are all the conscripts of the current year thus swept away ; but those of the preceding years, who have obtained a charter of exemption, under the conditions prescribed by law, are all dragged into the field by a decree of the military chief of their departments. We must not forget to mention another flagrant breach of law, if any enormity can be so called, which is committed, not only with impunity, but under the sanction of public authority. In the first tumults of the revolution, the parochial registers, at no period very accurately kept, were almost wholly neglected. As, therefore, no official documents can be produced for youths between seventeen and twenty, the recruiting officers, within the two last years,* have taken advantage of this circumstance to include in the conscription numbers whose appearance corroborated their assertion, that they were beyond the age, and whose remonstrances were rendered unavailing by their condition in life. The most formidable, however, of all the evils extraneous to the code we have ana-

* Before 1808.

lyzed, is a practice which has prevailed for some years, of anticipating, *by law*, the regular levies. The conscripts, as we know, of 1810, are already “(1808)” called out; and by this it must be understood, that those who would then attain the age of twenty, are already made to serve in the armies. These, and other causes, connected with the abuse of unlimited power, bring into the field a numerous population of boys, in appearance scarce able to bear the accoutrements of a soldier, and who, in their preparatory exercises, are objects both of pity and amazement.”

Such is the theory, and such the practical operation of the military system of France.—It has before been stated* that the French revolutionists, enthusiastic admirers and imitators of every thing *Roman*, formed, or rather professed to form their system of compulsory levy on the model of the Roman system of conscription. The reader was before referred to a sketch of that system, which, to avoid too great a digression from the subject immediately under discussion, has been placed in the appendix. A comparison will now be instituted between the leading regulations of the ancient and modern systems. Such a comparison will shew what im-

* Page 24 ante.

provements “the age of reason” has made on the institutions of antiquity, and may shed additional light on the native, intrinsic, peculiar deformity—on the broad and striking features of depravity which the modern system has been shewn to possess.—But it is evident, that a comparison between the French and Roman systems cannot be fairly made, without a reference to the situation and circumstances of Rome and France, and to the character and habits of the two nations, at the periods when they were respectively adopted. An oppressive military system is, in itself, bad ; but our censure of it should be encreased or diminished by a view of the situation, circumstances and character of the people on whom it is imposed.

With respect to the Romans, then, it may be alleged with truth, that they were propelled by necessity to the *adoption* of the system of compulsory levy :—such a system was, at that time, essential to their defence against the warlike tribes which pressed their little commonwealth on every side, and threatened it with premature extinction.—The French, on the contrary, adopted the system without necessity, at a time when they could have raised, by voluntary enlistment, an army sufficiently numerous, not only to defend France, but to make every other state on the continent tremble for its safety.—

That they adopted it without necessity, is an inference fairly deducible from facts notorious to all the world.

When Francis the first, in the sixteenth century, contended for mastery with Charles the fifth, whose dominions, exclusive of America, were more than twice as extensive and populous as his, he found no difficulty in defending his frontier, and even extended his views to foreign conquest, without the aid of a compulsory levy. When the loss of an army in Italy had laid his frontiers open to invasion, when his territory was in fact invaded, by a numerous army, under the command of Charles himself, he even then compelled his enemies to make a precipitate and disgraceful retreat, without resorting to this odious expedient. Moreover, it is known to all the world, that Louis the fourteenth, in his extreme old age, when his finances had been ruined by a long course of profusion, and the population of his kingdom greatly diminished by war and famine, not only defended France against the attacks of "the grand alliance," directed by two of the ablest generals in Europe,* but kept up a numerous army in Spain, without dragging a single unwilling peasant from his home. If the simple statement of these facts

* Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough.

be insufficient to shew that the adoption of the system of compulsive levy in one thousand seven hundred and ninety two was unnecessary, a single glance at the situation of France and her neighbours, at that period, will operate complete conviction. What mighty danger had France to apprehend from the attacks of Austria and Prussia, *with whom* alone she was then at war—a war, be it remembered too, commenced by herself?—Did not her rulers know full well the inveterate hereditary hatred which the houses of Lorraine and Brandenburg cherished against each other?—Did they not know that an union between the blood of Frederic the second and that of Maria Theresa, could not in the nature of things be permanent!—Or, if these well-founded calculations had proved incorrect, what had she to fear from their united force?—It had always been inferior to that of France, and at this time it was more so than ever. In the revolutionary energy and enthusiasm alone of the French people, the government possessed a resource which would have enabled it to resist the world united, without forcing a single man into the ranks. In truth, until the excessive tyranny of the revolutionary government had alienated the hearts of the people, the compulsive levy had a nominal existence only. The enthusiasm of a gallant peo-

ple would not suffer it to be enforced: They flocked around the standard on which the talismanic words *liberty* and *equality* were inscribed. If, in addition to this, we consider the immense extent of those pecuniary resources which the French government possessed* we shall be convinced that it could have raised, without resorting to the system of conscription, a military force more than sufficient for any legitimate purpose.—Such being the fact, how terrible a responsibility have they incurred who introduced the system into France!—What a mass of human misery have they unnecessarily produced—how many accusing sighs and groans have been registered in “heaven’s chancery” against them—how many curses are daily and hourly imprecated on their heads, by the women and children whose husbands and fathers have been torn from their fond embraces by the operation of this detestable system!

But let us proceed with our inquiry into the relative situations of Rome and France when each adopted its military system.—The Romans were, from the building of their city until long after the introduction of the compulsive levy, a community of soldiers ;†—their military system

* See page 21, ante.

† This is literally the fact: agriculture (in a great degree) the mechanical arts, the instruction of youth, and even the medical profession, were the business of slaves.

grew out of their manners and habits, and was, consequently, in a great degree, adapted to both. The French, on the contrary, when the system of conscription was suddenly forced upon them by their revolutionary government, were in proportion of twenty four to one* employed in agricultural, -commercial and other civil pursuits:—when the enthusiasm of the revolution had somewhat abated, they perceived that the system was completely at war with all their “habitudes and feelings”—with their customs and their prejudices.

Most truly is it said, in the criticism from which such copious extracts have been made, that these “should be consulted in every general act of legislation.” In every civilized country there is a large number of young men, devoted to books, anxious to acquire a stock of learning which may enable them to attain literary distinction, and confer benefits on the community, and capable of filling civil offices with ability—but averse, from principle, to a participation in wars of injustice and aggression. There are, doubtless, many such in France. How

* The military establishment of France, before the revolution was two hundred thousand only, out of a military population of five millions. It is now nearly a million. The above stated proportion of twenty four to one, has reference to *the men able to bear arms*.

keenly must such men feel the injustice and oppression of the system of compulsive and indiscriminate levy!—How much they curse the tyrannical government whose mandate drags them from their academic shades, blasts all their prospects of literary or professional eminence—forces them into the ranks, and carries them into distant climes, to fight the battles of ambition:

“To the great body of professional men, and of drooping merchants and manufacturers, who educate their children with care and tenderness, and who find no compensation in the splendour of the imperial diadem, for the degradation of their own order, and the loss of domestic comforts, the conscription appears the *maximum* of human sufferings, the most odious of all wrongs, and the most vexatious of all injustice. The lysees, or public schools, the seminaries of ecclesiastical noviciate, the universities of law and physic, are all subject to the visits of the recruiting officer, and forced to surrender up their pupils, without exception of genius or taste, at a period of life when the morals are in a state of oscillation—when the character of the frame itself is scarcely determined, and the understanding but in the first stage of development. Parents are not only made to suffer the pains of a separation under such circumstances but are

condemned to the unexpressible grief of seeing the principles and manners of their children exposed to total wreck, in the infectious communion of common soldiery—the meanest and most profligate of mankind. The impressment of a British seamen is doubtless a revolting spectacle; but falls far short of the scene of real distress, exhibited at the balloting of a conscription, when the parents or friends of the conscript are indulged, as is often the case, in drawing the ticket from the fatal urn. The piercing shrieks and tumultuous acclamations alternately uttered on these occasions by a people to whom nature has allotted such vivacity of character, wholly overpower the feeling of a spectator, and conduct him irresistibly to the conclusions we have adopted concerning the spirit with which the imperial dispensations are obeyed.”

Thus heavily does the conscription fall on the middle class, who are not oppressed by actual want, and who depend not on the labour of their hands for subsistence. But to the wretched peasantry of France it is productive of the utmost extremity of misery. To live under a military despotism, to bear a burthen of taxation such as no nation ever before endured, to see the surplus produce of their country rendered valueless by a perpetual embargo; all this is bad enough, but the compulsive levy caps the

climax of their sufferings. How many thousands of families must there be among the peasantry of that extensive and populous country, in which the father alone is able to perform efficient labour, and which therefore depend chiefly on the wages of his labour for subsistence. The mandate which tears the husband and the father from such a family, must sound in their ears more terrible than a sentence of death. Ah! would the tyrant but enter the lowly habitation of the peasant, while the ready ministers of his injustice and cruelty are enforcing his decrees, would he but witness the parting of a husband and a father from his children and his wife, under such deplorable circumstances, his obdurate heart might be melted!—How could he gaze on the mute anguish of the victim—on his eye, now rolling with rage and frenzy, and anon fixed and settled into the resignation of despair; how could he listen to the heart-rending shrieks of the wife, without cursing and abjuring a system fraught with such a multitude of evils? But, no:—his flinty heart never knew one soft emotion, one sensation of pity, or he would long since, have healed the wounds of bleeding Europe, and released his subjects from the grievous shackles of the conscription. To gratify his inordinate thirst, his insatiable longing for power, the arts and the sciences, the refinements

of civilized life, the happiness of his subjects, the repose of the world, all, all must be sacrificed.

It will appear from the comparison which will now be instituted between the French and Roman systems, that unjust and oppressive as the latter undoubtedly was, it was just and lenient compared with the former. It will appear that this monster, the offspring of the boundless ambition and cruel ingenuity of the French government, possesses not one of the fair features of its ancient kinsman, while it exhibits all his deformities, heightened and rendered still more disgusting, and some that are new and peculiar to itself. The oppressive regulations of the Roman system are rendered still more so, new regulations of the same sort are added, all its provisions of lenity are omitted.

1. In the Roman systems, for example, the time of service was *limited*:—in the French it is *unlimited*. After serving twenty years in the foot, or ten in the horse, the Roman was exempted from further liability to the conscription. The Frenchman, when he enters into the service of the emperor, is a slave for life. The Roman soldier beheld a term to his military labours, beyond which “hope creative spirit” could erect “a trophy sacred to his future days.” In contemplating, with fond anticipation, the ease

and tranquility of his old age,* he forgot the toils and the privations of the passing hour. The Frenchman is cut off entirely from these delusive but soul-soothing anticipations.

2. The Romans, of course, punished the refractory conscript and the deserter : the French inflict punishment not on them only, but—*proh pudor !* on their innocent parents ! In all the annals of tyranny nothing can be found more detestable than this. The statutes of Draco were said, because of their excessive rigour, to have been written in blood ; but he, sanguinary as he was—or Nero, or Caligula, never dared so far to outrage human feelings, as to enact a *law inflicting punishment on parents for the crimes of their children*. A stranger to the character of the French military code, and of the French government, would suppose that this excessive rigour, this novelty, this anomaly in legislation, was reserved for offences of the deepest die. How great would be his astonishment, and, if he possessed one particle of virtuous feeling, how glowing would be his indignation, when he learnt that it was aimed at a venial trespass, at an offence not *malum in se*, but only *malum prohibitum*—that its object was to prevent human

* The disbanded Roman soldiers, in the latter age of the republic, for the most part, received a donation of land from the government.

beings from attempting to escape perpetual slavery.

3 The Romans exempted from liability to the conscription those who laboured under physical disabilities :—the French, of necessity, do so likewise ; but they exact from the unfortunate victim of disease or casualty a *pecuniary indemnity* !

In America, in England, in every civilized country but France, the diseased and the maimed meet with the commiseration of their fellow men ; and, if they stand in need of it, the eleemosynary aid of the local authorities. In France alone is it penal to be unfortunate—in France alone is a tax levied on corporeal disability—in France alone does the government aggravate the misery of those afflicted with incurable disorders, by demanding of them a pecuniary indemnity !

4. The sanctions of the Roman system, though in a great degree arbitrary, were in practice comparatively mild : those of the French are severe and inhuman. That those of the Romans were in practice mild, is proved by the testimony of all the writers who have delivered down to posterity the history of the Roman commonwealth. That those of the French are severe and inhuman, that they are enforced with a rigour unknown in any other age or country, too clearly ap-

pears from the details already given. And, indeed, how could the sanctions of such a system be otherwise?—View it in all the stages of its operation—it is every where cruel and iniquitous.

The peasant is torn from the family which depends on his labour for subsistence. The ministers of tyranny regard not the lamentations of his disconsolate wife, of his helpless offspring or of his aged parents. He is dragged to the field of slaughter to fight the battles of a despot, whom from his very inmost soul he abhors and execrates, to aid in fixing ruin more stedfastly on a blood-stained throne, to rivet his own galling fetters more firmly. If, prompted by an “insurgent consciousness of right,” the unhappy man makes an effort to release himself by flight from the iron grasp of military despotism, he only subjects himself and all who are dear to him, to more protracted torments. An enormous fine is levied on his property, or if he has none, on that of his parents, who have no control over his actions, no share in the offence. His paternal lands, or the savings of his happier years are swallowed by the devouring gulph of imperial rapacity. His relatives are turned out, houseless and moneyless, to encounter the cruel buffetings of an unpitying world; or, on suspicion of connivance, are subjected to punishments

still more severe. If he be taken, either death, the last resource of the unhappy, releases him at once from his misery, or, he is condemned to suffer a punishment of long protracted toil and ignominy—to drag on the sad remnant of his days in hopeless wretchedness. If, too wise to attempt an escape by flight from the all-searching despotism of his government, he submits to his destiny, how dreary to him is the journey of life!—Cooped up, for years within the walls of some garrison-town, on the outskirts of the empire,—now suffering all the horrors of famine in a blockaded fortress, and now dispatched to another hemisphere to encounter pestilence and death, beneath a burning southern sky, exposed in the campaigns of Europe, to the excessive toils and privations of a soldier's life—every where made to execute the commands of relentless tyranny and all-grasping cupidity—every where exposed to the midnight dagger of the exasperated peasantry—such is the life which the conscript sees before him in long perspective. A slave, for an unlimited time, to military law, through the gloomy vista of futurity he can see no prospect gilded by a ray of hope, no limitation of misery, no term beyond which freedom and happiness will be his. Behold him in a foreign land, the victim of disease or the sword, breathing out his spirit in

groans and agony :—the dying man turns his wishful eyes towards the land of his nativity, towards the

“ Vine-covered hills and gay vallies of France,” and spends his last breath in imprecating curses on the tyrant who has forever separated him from objects so dear.

..... “ Alas !

Nor wife, nor children more shall he behold,

Nor friends, nor sacred home !”

What could have been the motives which induced the French government to adopt, what can be the reasons which cause it, without necessity, to persevere in so monstrous a system, a system discordant with the manners, habits, feelings and prejudices of every civilized people—a system which paralysis industry, arrests the progress of the arts and sciences, diffuses poverty and misery far and wide, and causes the great body of the people to abhor and detest their rulers ? Why has it fortified this system, odious and terrible in its “ best estate,” with so many cruel sanctions ? Why does it outrage the feelings of the people, and earn for itself a never-dying infamy, by punishing the innocent for the crimes of the guilty, by making parents responsible for the actions of their children, whom they have not seen for years, and who are, in many cases, separated from them by a thousand

leagues of ocean? Must not the motive which induced it to adopt and persevere in a system so revolting to human nature, have been one of uncommon strength and cogency? Yes: there is such a motive, a motive in which we shall find a ready answer to all these inquiries. *France has long aimed at universal conquest.* No other adequate motive can be assigned for the adoption of the system of conscription. The rulers of France were no doubt aware that it would destroy their popularity, and entail misery on their country; but they also knew that it would enable them to disregard the wishes of the people; and they were willing to sacrifice the prosperity and happiness of France to the attainment of their great object.

But the belief that they aim at universal conquest rests on other and firmer grounds than the mere adoption of the system of conscription. It is established by the uniform tenor of their subsequent conduct.

While the revolutionary government of '92 was proclaimed to all Europe, that though it wished to break the chains of every people on the continent, it was unalterably determined not to attempt an extension of its territory, it was deliberately preparing to seize on the dominions of the king of Sardinia. That old and feeble monarch had scarcely awaked from the

slumber of security into which the solemn declarations of the French government had lulled him, when he saw his country overrun by a republican army, and converted, by a decree of the national assembly, into a department of France.* This was the first overt act demonstrating a treasonable conspiracy, by the rulers of France, against the liberties of Europe and the world; and as it involved in it an abandonment of the principles by which, they had just before solemnly declared they meant to be governed, it was no equivocal indication of the perfidious policy which they and their successors have ever since so steadily pursued.

Since that time the French government has directed all its efforts, and with but too great success, to the execution of the grand project. The unlimited command of the military population of France, conferred on it by the system of conscription, has enabled it almost uniformly to overpower its enemies by numbers. But great as was its superiority in the numerical force of its armies, to governments which depended on voluntary enlistment alone for the recruiting of *theirs*, it has not owed its success to this superiority alone. It has excelled them as much in art and cunning, as it has exceeded them

* The department of Mont Blanc.

in force. Profound hypocrisy, perfidy, the corruption of the ministers of its enemies, the destruction of the identity of government and people, by declaring itself hostile to the former, and friendly to the latter—these were the arts, these were the villanies which it successfully practised against the powers of Europe :—it was *these* which opened the way for its armies, which sometimes left them nothing more to do than to occupy an already conquered country.

The *hypocrisy* of the French government was eminently displayed in its continual professions of philanthropy, regard to the rights of man, commiseration for the oppressions which the people of Europe suffered from their rulers, and disinterested concern for their welfare. How false and hollow-hearted were all these professions its conduct then and since has too clearly demonstrated.

Nor is its *perfidy* less notorious.—Did it not promise to the people of Holland and Switzerland, of Genoa, of Venice, in short, of all the Italian states, liberty and happiness? And did it perform its promises? No :—it has insulted, plundered and enslaved them all. Who is bold enough to deny that the French government has acted perfidiously to Spain? But it is useless to multiply examples, to prove what is notorious to all the world.

The corruption of the ministers of its enemies is another of the Machiavelian arts of the government of France. The author of a work not long since published,* has exhibited a mass of presumptive evidence sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind that some of the principal ministers of Austria, Prussia and Russia have long been in the pay of Napoleon and his revolutionary predecessors.

But the art which the French government applied, more successfully than any other, to the advancement of its grand scheme, was the affectation of waging war, not against *the people* of Europe, but in their favour, against the governments, which it indiscriminately denounced as corrupt and tyrannical. This was in the first years of the war, when it still pretended to be fighting for liberty and the rights of man. In this way it enlisted thousands of deluded wretches, in every country, under its banners, and raised a host of domestic enemies against every government.

All these nefarious arts, systematically employed by the French government, are so many proofs of its unprincipled ambition, of its having formed *a scheme of universal conquest*.

* Lewis Goldsmith's "History of the Cabinet of Bonaparte."

But to multiply inferior proofs is needless. Why have the eagles of France carried desolation through Europe, from the Baltic to the pillars of Hercules, from the Germanic ocean to the remotest shores of Italy? Because a restless and insatiable ambition has directed their flight—because the revolutionary governors of France, from the affectedly philanthropic Brissot, to the ruthless, relentless, all-destroying Napoleon, however variant in their other plans, have all agreed in this, that France shall wage war against the liberties of the human race, until they bow in lowly reverence to her tyrannical sway.

It is this scheme of universal conquest, I repeat it, which occasioned the adoption of the system of compulsive military levy; which has induced the emperor to retain *it alone* of all the institutions of the republic, and to enforce it by so many cruel and outrageous sanctions, that a majority of the people of France have learnt to abhor and detest their government, and to vent curses “not loud but deep,” against it, and its favourite measure, the system of conscription.

I HAVE now exhibited a picture, as faithful and exact as my feelings and prejudices would permit, of the military system of France. I have shewn that it originated in the boundless ambition of her rulers, and has been sustained to the present day, although loaded with the just execrations of the people, by the continued operation of the same powerful causes. Assuming it then as a fact, that France is actuated by this lawless spirit, it behoves those nations which still retain their independence, to inquire most diligently into the nature and extent of her power, and whether the enormous and blood-cemented fabric which she has reared on the ruins of European liberty and independence, is of a durable and permanent, or of a perishable and transitory nature. Without an accurate knowledge, as far as in the nature of things it is attainable, of these particulars, it is impossible for a government, at the present day, to form a wise and comprehensive system of national policy. So great is the power of France, so decided is her influence in the great family of nations, that any system of national policy, not predicated on a knowledge at once profound and comprehensive, of the nature, extent and probable duration of that power and influence, must be a wretched system of expedients, liable to continual change,

from the operation of unknown causes—even varying with the varying events of the hour.

Although the writer of these pages does not pretend to possess this profound and comprehensive knowledge, he may nevertheless be allowed to institute an inquiry into the subject; and he does so because he deems it of vital importance to his country, and because he hopes that his feeble effort, while it diffuses some little light, will elicit an abler investigation from some abler hand. But at the same time that he abjures every thing like a dogmatizing spirit, and assumes the humble garb of an inquirer after truth, he cannot, in all candour, avoid confessing that his inquiries have led him to a belief, that though the power of France, at present, is enormously great, it is of a transitory and perishable nature—that though she now threatens to destroy every vestige of liberty and independence throughout the civilized world, she will, before many years shall have elapsed, be reduced to her former rank among the powers of Europe.

That the power of France is, at present, enormously great, will be denied by none. At all times great and powerful, she has, within eighteen years, nearly doubled her territory and population. She has embraced within the promœrium of her empire the whole of the low countries, the most populous, the most industrious,

and before it was blasted by French connexion, the most commercial and wealthy section of continental Europe. Within the same all-grasping line she has included a part of Germany, two thirds of Italy, and even a portion of the eastern shore of the Adriatic. The republics of Holland, Venice and Genoa, the continental dominions of the king of Sardinia, the grand duchy of Tuscany, the estates of the Church—these are the independent states and territories which have been incorporated with France.

As king of Italy, her emperor wears the iron crown of the ancient princes of Lombardy; and his Italian subjects could tell, if they dared, that to the iron crown he added the iron sceptre of military despotism.

Nominally as “Protector,” but really as master, he governs the states which compose the “Confederation of the Rhine,” including, among others, the kingdoms of Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Westphalia and Saxony.

As “Mediator,” his sovereign authority is acknowledged in all the vallies of the once free and happy, but now enslaved and wretched Switzerland.

Naples, indebted to him for two upstart kings, is as thoroughly subjected to his sway as if she

were, what, by a single word he could at any time make her, a department of France.

The kingdom of Prussia, which but half a century since, resisted successfully all the great continental powers united, is completely subservient to his will.

Austria humbled by his arms, but still more so by a disgraceful connexion, forced on her by the dread of political extinction, is compelled, however reluctantly, to side with the tyrant.

Denmark, by adopting, at his command, the ruinous "continental system," has shewn that she has not power or courage to resist him.

The Swedes, will ere long be governed by one of his generals, whom the fear of his power has compelled them to exalt to the dignity of crown-prince of the kingdom.

Even Russia, since the time when the standard of France was displayed on her frontiers, and glared on the sight of the timid Alexander, like a baleful meteor, boding ruin to his empire, has tremblingly pursued the line of policy dictated by Napoleon.

Spain and Portugal, overrun by his armies, are engaged in a tremendous struggle for political existence.

Such is the picture which Europe presents to the eye of the observer, such are the external

appearances which France exhibits of resistless power.

But it is not the vast extent of her territory, or the greatness of her population alone, which renders the power of France so formidable to Europe and the whole civilized world. The very despotism under which she groans has endued her with a "distempered energy." The nature of her government, practically more absolute than even those of Russia and Turkey, gives her an advantage in war, over every nation to which she is opposed. The emperor of France has the resources of his empire entirely and completely at his disposal. The system of conscription, one of the effects of the despotism of the government, by enabling him to multiply his armies at pleasure, seems of itself sufficient to invest him with irresistible power.

To the revolution, and to the wars which have arisen out of it, France is indebted for the further advantage of having in her armies an unusual proportion of able commanders. The revolution, by levelling the artificial barriers which closed the avenues to distinction against the entrance of low-born genius, quickly enlisted in the service of the government all the talents of the country, whether civil or military. Deprived of the adventitious aids of riches,

birth and powerful connexions, sturdy folly and feeling imbecility could no longer force or worm their way into office and power : and though

——“ Estates, degrees and offices
Were” *still* “ derived corruptly,”

active talents were essential to their attainment. Under this state of things many great villains arose to eminence, but a fool could scarcely be found adorned with the insignia of office. This, it is obvious, is an advantage which the other nations of Europe cannot possess, in an equal degree, without sustaining a revolution similar to that which conferred it on France ; a price too great to pay for any conceivable advantage.

It is to the ability of her generals, more than to any peculiar excellence in her soldiers, that France is indebted for another advantage, I mean the reputation of superiority in arms, I had almost said, of invincibility. The terror of her name has more than once effected objects for France, which her utmost efforts would have barely sufficed to attain. The army which believes the one opposed to it superior to itself, in valour, in good fortune, in discipline, or in the ability of its commander, is already more than half defeated : while, on the contrary, that which believes in its own superiority, which proudly confides in its good fortune, confidently relies on the ability of its commander, and looks back

to a long series of victories achieved by its valor—such an army is almost certain of victory. The portentous rapidity with which France achieved her first conquests in Italy and the Netherlands, invested her name with a halo of military renown, at which the nations of the continent could not gaze without astonishment and terror. No time was given them to recover from their first panic:—blow followed blow in such ominous and rapid succession, that the bravest hearts began to quake, and a superstitious notion of the invincibility of their invaders, pervaded almost universally the minds of the vulgar.

But even these are not all the points in which France is formidable : the power derived from all these sources is rendered still greater, still more efficient, by the perfidy of her government. The most earnest professions of friendship, the most solemn treaties of peace and amity, afford no security against a sudden invasion by the military force of France. Professions of friendship, of regard, and even of “*love*”—treaties solemnly ratified, in the face of heaven—these are only the opiates which that perfidious government administers, to lull its victims into a fatal sleep. They greedily swallow the gilded pill—they repose on the lap of false security—they dream that “the rights of a just nation are ever respected”—that they will long enjoy the blessings of

tranquility, that their wealth and prosperity will continue to increase, "that it is a waste of the public treasure to prepare for wars which may never happen," such, and still more fantastic and absurd are their dreams, until they are suddenly awakened by

— "The neighing steed, the shrill trump,"

and the loud-thundering cannon of an invading enemy. Anon, they behold the pavements of their cities stained with the best blood of their country—they see the standard of France waving over the parapets of their fortresses—they see the smoke ascending from the ruins of the cities whose inhabitants had attempted a fruitless resistance. Their constitution and their laws are abolished: the code of Napoleon, whose fundamental principle is blind obedience to the commands of a military despot, is every where proclaimed; enormous contributions are imposed; in default of payment, the cottage, the palace and the consecrated temple are subjected to indiscriminating pillage, the grave itself is forced to open its "ponderous and marble all-devouring jaws," and disgorge its wealth. Ere long, vast tracts of country are seen, in which the profound and deathlike stillness of desolation, is interrupted only by the triumphant shouts of a brutal soldiery, or by the groans of their victims. This is not declamation, this is not hyperbole,

alas ! it is history—and every Spaniard can tell how true.

————— Quis talia fando,
Myrmidonum, Dolopumve, aut duri miles Ulyssei,
Temperet à lachrymis ?

It is from the fatal sleep which may expose them to all these accumulated horrors that I would arouse my countrymen. But, alas ! my efforts will be fruitless. A warning voice has already cried aloud from the tombs of the departed European republics, telling them to beware of the arts of France—to distrust her professions—to avoid all connexion with her—to prepare, in time, for the defence of their liberty against her insidious attacks. They have not heard it—they still slumber. Would they but arise in their strength, and, armed at all points, watch with a jealous eye all the movements of this foe to the human race, the danger which now menaces them, might be averted. The black and lowering cloud which now threatens to pour its vengeance on them, would ere long be dissipated. The power of France is now tremendously great ; for a few years it will continue so ; and during those few years, many are the perils which surround every free and independent state. If they preserve their independence throughout the period of unnatural energy which is allotted to France, they will have

earned a long continuance of liberty and happiness.

I have before said that "my inquiries have led me to the belief, that though the power of France, at present, is enormously great, *it is of a transitory and perishable nature*: that, though she now threatens to destroy every vestige of liberty and independence, in the civilized world, she will, before many years shall have elapsed, be reduced to her former rank among the powers of Europe." It is proper that I should here state the grounds of my belief.

And, first, the testimony of all history shows that great conquests, which are rapidly effected, are rarely permanent ; and that those only are permanent which are effected by slow degrees. Indeed, it seems to be a law governing the whole moral and physical world, that those things which are suddenly produced are deficient in durability, while those are long-lived which attain to maturity slowly. It is agreed, for example, by ethical writers, that sudden reformations in the morals are seldom lasting, while gradual ones are usually permanent. So, among plants, the mushroom which is produced in a night, in a few days fades away and perishes, while the sturdy oak, which attains not its growth in less than one hundred years, firmly rooted in its native mountain, defies the rage of

the elements for centuries. Among animals, the ephemeron springs instantaneously into maturity, and in a few short hours is mingled with its parent dust ; while man, condemned to a longer infancy than any other animal, exceeds them all in the duration of his life.

Not to mention the events of remote antiquity, which vague traditions rather than authentic history has transmitted to posterity, the noted example of the Macedonian conquests is one, among many proofs of the correctness of my position. Concerning these the testimony of history is copious and indisputable. In less than twelve years Alexander subdued all Asia Minor, the extensive Persian dominions in Upper Asia and Africa, together with a part of India, and erected on the ruins of the empire of Cyrus, one of still more ample dimensions. How soon did this unwieldy empire fall to pieces ! How quickly did Macedon lose her preponderance among the nations of that æra ! She sunk, as if exhausted by the efforts which she had made, into a state of inaction, and scarcely maintained her former rank in the world.

Approaching nearer to modern times, we see in the empire of Charlemagne, another exemplification of the truth of this doctrine. France, under his auspices, became the mistress of Eu-

rope, and France, under his immediate successor, voluntarily yielded precedence to Germany, whom her arms had not long before subdued.

Passing again into the East, we see Gengis Khan, emerging from the desarts of Scythia, at the head of a tumultuary army, overturning empires and kingdoms in his course and reducing all Asia to subjection. Like a frost-bearing wind from his own cold, inhospitable and dreary desarts, he blasted the fertile regions of southern Asia, and like the wind of the desert he passed quickly away. Had it not been for the tremendous desolation which his arms produced, it would, in a few years, have been almost forgotten that Gengis had wielded the sceptre of undivided Asia. His immediate successors, after having converted one of the finest portions of the globe into a howling wilderness, retired into the boundless desarts of the north.

The conquests of Tamerlane were as suddenly effected, and they were scarcely more permanent. Almost every country in Asia was subdued by his arms; Hindostan alone remained to his descendants.

It is no less true, that of the great empires formed by conquest, those have been most permanent which have been most gradually formed. The Roman empire in ancient, and the Turkish in modern times, afford evidence of the fact.

The former was more than eight hundred years attaining its growth, and four hundred more passed by before it was

“ Push’d from its wide ambitious base,”

by the furious and unremitted efforts of the northern barbarians : a duration unparalleled, except by China, in the history of the world.

The Turkish empire, founded in the thirteenth century, conquered and incorporated province after province in slow succession, for the space of one hundred and fifty years : nearly four hundred more have elapsed ; and it still repels the assaults of its enemies—it still exhibits tokens of vigour, which, unless it should be overwhelmed with the lava which still pours from the revolutionary volcano of France, will preserve its existence till centuries more have rolled by.

These few examples, selected from many, afford evidence of the correctness of the assertion that “ great conquests which are rapidly effected are rarely permanent, and that those only are permanent which are effected by slow degrees.” The reason is obvious. When a warlike people, roused into action by ambitious rulers, suddenly overruns and conquers a territory more extensive than their own, the empire thus formed is composed of heterogeneous and discordant elements, nearly equal in physical

force, which cannot, by any human power be made to harmonize. The conquering people is not numerous enough to infuse its spirit into, to stamp its character on the conquered, and, by thus assimilating them to their conquerors, to make the yoke sit lightly on them. Throughout the whole conquered territory—in all its provinces, their former independence is still remembered ;—one sentiment pervades them all—for time has accustomed none of them to bear a foreign yoke with patience. Perceiving that their physical force is as great as that of their conquerors, their discontents at length assume the form of rebellion :—by common consent, and by a general simultaneous effort they throw off the yoke which has been imposed upon them.

In empires, on the contrary, which are formed by slow degrees, each conquered province, when added to the empire, forms but a small part of the whole, and its spirit and character are emerged in that of the conquerors. It sees no newly subjugated territory, impatient of the yoke, from which it might hope for assistance in a struggle against its conquerors : its physical force is inferior to theirs—it is compelled to submit to its destiny—it loses the feelings of independence, and learns to identify its interests and its character with those of the empire of which it forms a part, and with which it is now completely amalgamated. In a few

years another province is added and goes thro' similar process. Thus does the gradual mode of its formation confer durability on an empire : and thus does the rapidity with which great conquests are effected, afford a clear indication of their approaching loss.

If I have succeeded in shewing that history and reason concur in supporting the position, that great conquests rapidly effected, are rarely permanent, then have I developed one of the principles of destruction interwoven in the fabric of French power, and exhibited one of my reasons for believing that power to be "of a perishable and transitory nature."

The principle of instability which I have just stated, is one common to *all* great and sudden conquests. I now proceed to state reasons for doubting the permanence of French power, deduced from the peculiar situation and circumstances of France. And I doubt not I shall be able to show, that many of her sources of power are completely dried up, and that others are fast failing.

I have before stated that in the first years of the revolution, the French government derived from the sale of the estates of the clergy, and the consequent *emission* of *assignats*, and from *the sale of the confiscated estates of the emigrants*, pecuniary means of an almost incalculable

amount. Money has been emphatically said to constitute "the sinews of modern warfare;" and the amazing energy of the French military operations, during the first years of the revolution, while their extraordinary supplies lasted, evinces the correctness of the position. The jacobin government, in one thousand seven hundred and ninety four, arrayed one million four hundred thousand men on the frontiers of France. Who, knowing this, will wonder that the nations of Europe were appalled, and that the republicans, every where out-numbering their enemies, rapidly extended their conquests? But these pecuniary means, great as they were, were dissipated in a few years, by the boundless profusion of public expenditure, and the infamous embezzlements of all the successive rulers of France.

After the assignats were cried down, and entirely banished from circulation, after the immense sums arising from the sale of the confiscated estates were expended, another pecuniary resource, scarcely less ample, remained to France. I allude to the *contributions* levied by her armies on the countries which had been either subjugated by force, or induced by her hypocritical professions, to form a connexion with her. Every man who has read a narrative

of the wars which have arisen out of the French revolution, whether regularly compiled by the historian, or doled out to the greedy appetite of curiosity, in the columns of our political journals, must know with what unblushing rapacity, enormous contributions of money, clothes and provisions, were levied on the inhabitants of every country, whether friendly or hostile, into which the armies of France found entrance. War, as it was carried on by the European states, for two centuries before the French revolution, never failed to exhaust the finances, even of the victorious nation. But the wars of revolutionary France against the continental powers, for a long time, not only supported her military establishment, but replenished her treasury.

The Italian peninsula, the *people* of which almost every where received the invading French with open arms, hailed them as deliverers, and embraced them as brethren, was, in a few years, stripped of every species of moveable wealth, and reduced to a state of abject poverty and wretchedness. The splendid monuments of their ancient glory, which could by any possibility be removed, and the exquisite works, in painting and sculpture of their modern artists, were ravished from the degenerate Italians,

together with their merchandize and their money, by these indiscriminating plunderers.

In Holland also a majority of the people were favourable to the progress of the French arms, and received their invaders with every demonstration of stupid and extravagant joy. Yet has that nation, by a long series of infamous exactions, enforced at the point of the bayonet, been entirely deprived of its immense wealth, accumulated by the unremitted industry of more than two hundred years.

In the same manner the nations which *opposed* the encroachments of France, were compelled to furnish to her armies contributions of money, clothes and provisions, only limited by their means of payment. In this respect the open enemies of France fared not worse than her friends ; for both were plundered to the utmost point of endurance. The ten provinces in the Netherlands, and all the provinces of Germany, have contributed in this way, to the support of the armies and to the replenishment of the treasury of France.

Spain and Portugal contributed their quotas likewise ; not in the shape of military contributions, levied on every city town and village, but in the form of a tribute paid by the government—the price of French forbearance. Portugal,

relying somewhat on British protection, and more remote from danger than Spain, contributed less than the latter in proportion to her means. But Spain, poor, degraded, degenerate Spain ; for such she then was, after the disgraceful peace of one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, poured all her pecuniary, military and naval means into the lap of France. The treasures of the new world were as much relied upon by Napoleon, as if the provinces from which they were derived had been his exclusive and undisputed property.

Of the pecuniary resources which I have enumerated, all have failed except the single one of military contribution, and that is well nigh exhausted. The continent of Europe, desolated by long continued wars, impoverished to the last degree by the enactions of France and by the anti-commercial system which the emperor has forced it to pursue, can no longer yield food for the avidity of its tyrants. Italy and Holland, as before stated, were long since stripped of all their superfluities ; and the campaigns of one thousand eight hundred and five, six, seven and nine, completed the impoverishment of Germany. Arrears of the contributions imposed upon Prussia by France, in one thousand eight hundred and seven, remain still unpaid, be-

cause that desolated and ruined kingdom is absolutely unable to discharge them. The plunder of Spain, one of the poorest countries in Europe, has not sufficed for the support of the armies necessarily kept up in that country. From these facts it is evident France will hereafter derive but small supplies from military contributions, even if she should remain as she now is, proudly preeminent on the continent. She has already reaped the harvest; the gleanings only remain.

She must then, like other nations, depend hereafter on *regular revenue* and on *loans*. Let us consider these separately.

The budget of one thousand eight hundred and six* states the receipts of the treasury in that year to have been one thousand one hundred and thirty three millions two hundred and thirty three thousands six hundred and ninety one francs; or about two hundred and twelve millions of dollars. I derive this fact, and indeed a great part of the little information which I possess on the subject, from Mr. Walsh's very able "View of the taxation of the French empire." It appears from the whole tenor of his statements, and they deserve the fullest credit,

* There is the best reason to believe that the revenue of France has not since then increased.

that the sum abovementioned is not raised in France without the utmost extremity of fiscal oppression. There is scarcely a conceivable subject of taxation which the ingenuity of the French financiers has not discovered; and their exactions have almost reached the *ne plus ultra*, the point beyond which military despotism itself cannot go with safety.—“Gentz, who had attentively studied the financial system of the imperial government of France, speaks of it in the year eighteen hundred and six” as “a machine wound up to such a pitch as almost to make its strings crack.” I am well satisfied from my own observation, of the accuracy of this opinion. The French people are absolutely saturated with taxes.”—*Letter on the Genius and Disposition, &c. page 203.*

It results from these facts, that it would be difficult, nay impossible for the government to increase its annual revenue, derived from taxation. The deplorable state of the interior of France leads us to the same conclusion.

“Combined with the evils which I have already had occasion to notice” (says Mr. Walsh, p. 88 of the same work) “various other causes conspired to heighten the national calamity.—The extinction of all public spirit and of the influence of public opinion—the depopulation

and decay of the great towns—the decline of agriculture and manufactures—the stagnation of internal trade—the stern dominion of a military police—incessantly checked the exultation natural to the mind, on viewing the profusion of bounties with which the hand of providence has gifted this fine region. The pressure of taxes was aggravated by the most oppressive rigour in the collection. The peasant or farmer who was delinquent in paying his taxes, had a file of soldiers, under the name of *garnisers*, quartered upon him, who consumed the fruits of his industry, as a compensation for the loss sustained by the state. The grape, in numberless instances, was permitted to rot on the vine, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor, either to dispose of his wine when made, or to discharge the imposts levied upon every stage of the process of making it. I was credibly informed that families were frequently compelled to relinquish their separate establishments, and to associate in their domestic economy, in order to lighten, by dividing, the burthen of the taxes.”

The effects of the loss of external trade were every where visible :—in the commercial cities half deserted, and reduced to a state of inaction and gloom truly deplorable :—in the inland

towns in which the populace is eminently wretched, and where I saw not one indication of improvement, but on the contrary numbers of edifices falling into ruin:—on the high-roads where the infrequency of vehicles and travellers denoted but too strongly the decrease of internal consumption, and the languor of internal trade; and among the inhabitants of the country, particularly of the south, whose poverty is extreme, in consequence of the exorbitant taxes, and of the want of an outlet for their surplus produce. In one thousand eight hundred and seven, the number of mendicants in the inland towns was almost incredible. The condition of the peasantry, as to their food, clothing and habitations, bore no comparison with the state of the same class in England.

“The interior of the French empire” (page 203) “affords no promise of the possibility of collecting hereafter a more abundant revenue than that which is now wrung from the people. The pressure of their actual burthens obstruct the growth of future resources.”

May we not safely go further than Mr. Walsh, and say that so long as the state of things which he describes shall continue, the revenue of France will not only not increase, but must necessarily diminish?—Nay, I doubt

not, that it has already begun to diminish : for though no deficit is acknowledged in that mockery of the forms of a free government, the annual budget, it is observable in the diminished energy of the military operations in Spain and Portugal.

Can the French government then resort to loans, the usual resource of governments whose revenue is unequal to their wants ?—It cannot : for it is without the requisite credit. The refusal of the directorial government, in one thousand seven hundred and ninety six to redeem the assignats, even at their depreciated current value, or to make any compromise whatever with the holders—the reduction of the national debt, in the same year, to one third of its original amount, by a mere *arrette*—but above all, the notorious bad faith of the present government, evinced in all its transactions, have destroyed in France every vestige of public credit. The government of that country is precisely in the situation of a notorious swindler, whom nobody will trust, however fair his promises, however plausible his representations, however extensive his means.

But if it even possessed the requisite credit, of whom would it borrow ?—Military exactions and anti-commercial decrees have annihilated the wealth of the continent : there is no longer

a monied capital in France or in her numerous dependencies, commensurate with the wants of the government which tyrannizes over them all. Honest governments only can procure loans, and rich countries only can afford to lend the immense sums which the extravagance of modern governments demand.

Assuming these, then, as facts—that the resources of *paper money* and *domestic confiscation* have entirely failed—that *that of foreign plunder* is nearly exhausted—that the *regular revenue* must inevitably decline—and that *loans* cannot be effected—will France be able much longer to support a military establishment large enough to retain the warlike nations of Europe in subjection?—Can she finish the conquest of that continent, and retain it in slavery, with a revenue far less than that which Britain employs in active and unremitted efforts to preserve the independence of the nations which still nobly maintain the struggle, and to emancipate those which are under a cruel thralldom?—These are momentous questions:—they are questions which time only can with certainty answer. But when we consider how vast, how surpassing all computation were the pecuniary means with which the conquests of France were effected, we have, I think, good grounds to believe that they cannot be retained by means comparatively so small.

The testimony of the judicious and eloquent Walsh will illustrate this topic also. "Their means"* (says he, p. 203) "would be altogether inadequate to the entire support of the immense armies in the pay of the government. The public expenses are more than equal to the revenue which is drawn from the interior of the empire. Foreign booty therefore, as I have before suggested, is a necessary resource, in order to enable the government to support the armies with which its own existence is indissolubly connected."

In the failure then, of the pecuniary resources of France, and in the consequent reduction of her military establishment, we see further grounds for the belief that her power is of a transitory and perishable nature.

But these are not the only resources of France which have been diminished by a warfare of eighteen years continuance. If we may believe the best informed writers on the subject, the military population of that country has been greatly diminished by the enormous draughts which have within a few years been made on it; in other words, its natural increase has not been equal to the waste of war. "In one thousand eight hundred and seven" (says

* Those of the French people.

Mr. Walsh, page 192) “ the fields were principally cultivated by women ;* the long succession of wars having swept away that male population which, under the auspices of a pacific government, would now have been the instrument of an unequalled production of the best fruits of the earth.”

He cites, in a note, the authority of Puchet, the French statistical writer, to shew the “ diminution of the relative male population in several departments, owing partly to the havoc made by the armies,” and partly to the military levies. The government of France not content with expending its annual revenue in money, and the annual increase of its subjects, but hurried on by an impetuous and cruel ambition, has encroached upon its capital, and waged war with all its resources of men and money.

The introduction, within the last three years, of such a multitude of foreigners, into the armies of France, seems to countenance the presumption that the government is unable to recruit them with native subjects. The impolicy of teaching the conquered nations the art of war must be obvious to the government of France ; and no adequate cause for the adop-

* Mr. Byggè, a learned Dane, who travelled through France in 1798, makes a similar statement.

tion of so impolitic a measure can be discovered, but the difficulty of procuring men at home, in consequence of the failure of the male population. When imperial Rome began to recruit her legions from among the half-subdued tribes on her frontier, the military art decayed at home : whole armies revolted, and employed in the destruction of her power, the skill and discipline which they had acquired under her banners. As it was with ancient Rome, so may it be with modern France.

But other substantial reasons may be advanced in support of my position. The conquests of France have been effected over nations whose energies had been paralyzed by the concurrence of a multitude of causes, but which are, nevertheless naturally brave, are now become warlike, and only wait for a favourable opportunity to exert against their tyrants that strength which is unquestionably sufficient to relieve them from a galling yoke.

A short time before the French revolution a decay of the military spirit, produced chiefly by the long peace which preceded that memorable æra, was visible in almost every country of continental Europe. But it was not the military spirit only, which, at that period, had suffered decay. In a great portion of Europe, all the noblest and best faculties of man had degenerated. A com-

bination of moral and physical causes, so numerous and complex, that volumes might be filled with the detail of them, of which, however, bad government and a degrading superstition were probably the most operative, had reduced the people of the two great European peninsulas to a state of deplorable imbecility.

In Spain, it is true, some feeble efforts had been made, during the preceding twenty years, to improve the condition of the people—to invigorate agriculture and commerce and to exalt the character of the nation: but they had been projected on a limited scale, and had been attended with little success. The great mass of the people were still in a deplorable situation. The spirit which had animated the bosoms of their ancestors, which had so long checked the Romans when in the full tide of conquest—which had expelled the warlike Moors, after a furious and long protracted struggle—which, even in modern times, had covered the Spanish name with glory, and made Europe tremble for her safety—that spirit was, to all appearance dead, never to revive.

Portugal was still lower in the scale of national character. Governed by a dynasty of imbecile monarchs, whose grovelling souls never dared to emulate the great example of the Johns and the Henries who had preceded them,

—cursed with an abject, base and cowardly nobility—with an arrogant, avaricious, ignorant clergy, the people of this wretched country had almost sunk to the lowest point of degradation. The utmost degree of their courage was displayed in thrusting the midnight dagger into the unguarded bosom of a foe—their religion evaporated in empty pageantry, or was displayed in tormenting and burning at the stake some unfortunate heretic—their love was a gross and beastly sensuality—the crime not to be named by modest lips was committed by men of every degree.—Such was the condition of the southwestern peninsula of Europe.

Nor was Italy much higher in national character. The arts and the sciences, it is true, still lingered on her shores, as if loth to abandon a country, once their favourite abode ; but they languished and seemed ready to expire. The picture of Italian degeneracy, corruption, frivolity and sensuality, which Goldsmith, in his “Traveller,” had drawn with a master’s hand, was still but too correct.

In the north, the Hollanders, once the brave opposers of tyranny, and the proudest bulwark of the liberties of Europe, were sunk into an apathy the most profound. There the struggle between the love of glory and of money had long since terminated, and avarice, now without

rival or competitor, ruled despotically in every bosom. Their naval and military establishments, long neglected, had fallen into decay, and now subserved no other purpose than to afford sine-cure offices to the favorites of a corrupt and feeble government. The little energy which was left was exclusively devoted to the accumulation of wealth, and this sordid appetite for gold had nearly destroyed that morality for which the Hollanders were once pre-eminently distinguished.

The Swiss, though they retained much of their ancient purity and simplicity of manners, were divided by a factitious spirit, and were suffering under the effects of too long continued peace and tranquility. As a nation they had taken no part in the wars of Europe in the two hundred years which preceded the French revolution ; and the martial spirit of the people had of course declined and become almost extinct. Never was the correctness of that filthy remark, “ perpetual peace converts men into beasts of burthen”—more forcibly illustrated than in the case of Switzerland.

Germany, whose population has always been brave and warlike, was governed, at the æra which we are considering, almost universally by weak and irresolute princes. Without union, without confidence in each other, without ener-

gy or conceit either in devising or executing their plans of operation, they were ill prepared to withstand the revolutionary torrent which suddenly burst in upon them.

Most of the nations of Europe moreover, laboured under certain disadvantages inseparable from long established monarchical governments. Aristocratic distinctions had deprived them of the services of many who were fitted by nature for those stormy and tempestuous times. Birth, riches and influential connexions, had in all of them too great a share in exalting men to the highest civil and military stations. The consequence was, that these were often filled by men of very slender capacity—by men, who though they might steer the national ship aright while the winds and the waves were propitious, had neither courage nor skill sufficient to navigate her safely through storms and tempests, among rocks and shoals. This was one of the multitude of causes whose combined operation palsied the energies of almost every nation of continental Europe.

Such having been the condition and circumstances of most of the nations of Europe, at the æra of the French revolution, instead of being surprised that they have been unable to resist the arms of France, we have rather cause to

wonder that they have maintained the struggle so long.

But the character and circumstances of the European nations have been materially changed by eighteen years of warfare. They have been taught in the school of adversity, and have acquired that energy which it confers on nations as well as on individuals. The shrill clarion of war has aroused their dormant faculties. How different are the Spaniards now, from the Spaniards who, a few years since, humbled themselves at the feet of France, and besought her to grant them a disgraceful peace ! Driven to desperation by the perfidy and oppressions of Napoleon, they have aroused themselves from the slumber of ages, and have determined to resume their former rank among the nations of the earth. The standard of independence has been unfurled, and thousands, from every province, have rallied around it. Recollecting that at no distant æra their fathers were free, they have resolved that, henceforth, they will obey neither a domestic nor a foreign tyrant. While, therefore, they proclaim their loyalty to Ferdinand the seventh, they avow their fixed determination to restrain his authority within legitimate bounds, and to restore the ancient free constitution of their country, with new banners

against the encroachments of arbitrary power :
And

—— “having once conceived the glowing thought
“ Of freedom, they in that hope possess
“ All that the contest calls for, spirit, strength,
“ The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
“ The surest presage of the good they seek.”

Avarice, effeminacy and cowardice, like a passing thought, have fled away. In their place we behold generosity bordering on profusion, a patient endurance of hardships, and an heroic contempt of danger and of death. We have seen individuals sacrifice their all to prop the falling fortunes of their country :—we have seen an undisciplined peasantry obstinately maintaining an unequal conflict with the veteran legions which had subdued the warlike nations of the north :—we have seen even the softer sex emulous of the fame of patriotism, and entreating admission into the ranks, that they might assist in rescuing their beloved country from an odious tyranny.

Even the Portuguese have caught the sacred enthusiasm, and are undergoing a moral and political regeneration. They now dare to defend the country which three years since, like dastards, they surrendered without resistance to their invaders. Who would then have believed that the cowards who trembled at the very name of a Frenchman, could be converted into

gallant soldiers, could be made to withstand the most furious onsets of the legions of France,

“In the fair field of fighting men?”

Nevertheless, *such things are*: such effects have been produced on the most degraded people of Europe, by the tyranny of France.

What then may we not expect from the brave and warlike inhabitants of Germany and the north?—When the time shall arrive, and arrive it must, when the continually increasing oppressions of France shall compell them to take up arms, will not the recollection of all their accumulated wrongs endue them with more than mortal energy?—Will they not remember the “incalculable and heart-struck evils” inflicted on them by France—the wanton devastation of their fruitful fields—the pillaging and burning of their habitations—the profanation of the temples of their religion—the slaughter of their friends and kinsmen—and the violation of their wives and daughters?—And will not such recollections render them invincible?—Who can doubt that the inhabitants of the conquered countries loathe, abominate and abhor their conquerors?—Are they men?—And have they not human passions?—Have they *paissions*?—And do they not love their wives, their children and their friends, and hate the tyrants who in-

flict misery and death itself on the objects of their love?—Will not the operation of these powerful feelings at length rouse them to arms?—it must, it will.

The noble example of Spain is before their eyes: with a mute eloquence it exhorts them to remember that they are men—that they have rights—and that their tyrant is not omnipotent. The charm of French invincibility is dissolved. During three successive campaigns the Spaniards have withstood the utmost efforts of France, and they may still proudly say that they have a country. What though the armies of their ferocious enemy are in possession of their principal cities, and lay waste the plains of Castile and Andalusia, the spirit of independence yet lives in their bosoms—they cherish it amid the rocks and glens of their rugged mountains. An inextinguishable hatred of their tyrants continually urges them on to deeds of noble daring—the legions of Napoleon waste away before their impetuous and oft-repeated attacks. At length, but after a long and furious struggle, Spain will be free. But it is not only by the example of Spain that the nations of Europe are encouraged to rebel against the tyranny of France: they have, in the generous and noble conduct of Great Britain to the Spaniards and

Portuguese, a sure pledge of her determination to aid, to the utmost extent of her means, every nation on the continent which shall be bold enough to conceive "the glowing thought of freedom." The conduct of Britain to Spain and Portugal is above all praise. When the "accusing spirit" shall convey to "heaven's chancery" a detail of the arrogance, of the obstinacy and of the injustice of Britain, the "recording angel," recollecting the aid so generously yielded to Spain and Portugal in their utmost need, shall "drop a tear and blot it out forever."

The sure prospect of aid from an ally so generous and so powerful will hasten the hour of a general insurrection of the enslaved people of the continent against French supremacy. With a cause so righteous—with a superiority of physical force, aided by the enthusiasm which a struggle for liberty never fails to produce, how could they be otherwise than successful?—France will no doubt call forth all her energy to retain them in subjection ; but all her energy will be exerted in vain against nations who will have experienced her tyranny to be insufferable, and will have determined to relieve themselves from it or perish in the attempt.

I have now stated my reasons for believing that the power of France is of a perishable and transitory nature. After adducing the evidence of history to prove that great conquests, which like those of France, are rapidly effected, are rarely permanent—I proceeded to shew that of her pecuniary resources, those of confiscation, paper money and tribute have entirely failed—that the resource of plunder is nearly exhausted, and that the *more* permanent one of revenue by taxation, has diminished and must continue to diminish until the present impoverishing system shall be abandoned. I have shewn that her population is insufficient to recruit the enormous military establishment requisite to keep Europe in awe, and that she has been compelled to resort to the dangerous expedient of enlisting foreign soldiers under her banner. I have shewn that the people of Europe are no longer that feeble and degenerate race which a few years since bowed before the supremacy of France; but that they have, on the contrary, acquired energy and courage in the school of adversity and in the midst of reiterated defeats, that they are impatient of the yoke, and ardently desire to be relieved from it—that the successful resistance of Spain, and the hope of aid from Britain will, in all probability, ere long

rouse them to arms—and that in a struggle for independence they have every chance of success.

Nevertheless, it is not probable that the power of France will in five, in ten, or even in twenty years, be reduced within its ancient limits. The causes which will produce this effect are not sufficiently powerful to produce it suddenly. The intervening period will be one of terror and alarm to every nation within reach of the arms of France; for she can spread the most terrible desolation over countries, which, she is unable finally to subdue. More especially will it be dangerous to countries, which, like our own, are without an efficient military constitution, without a naval force to meet the squadrons of an enemy on the ocean, and ward off invasion—and, worse than all, which are ruled by men without energy or wisdom sufficient for so momentous a crisis.

It is far from improbable, that the contemptuous opinion entertained of us by the tyrant of France, who has pronounced us to be a nation “without just political views, without honour and without energy,” may induce him to seize the first favourable opportunity of conveying an army to our shores. Though I am deeply conscious of the incurable weakness which the

existence of a vast body of slaves in the south, entails on that portion of the union, and though I fear much from the want of energy in our rulers, I am too proudly confident of the hereditary bravery of my countrymen, to fear the final result of such a conflict, to doubt that it would be such a result, that thenceforth, the armies of Europe would.

—— “shun our fatal shores.”

But we need only cast our eyes toward Europe, groaning in agony, and bleeding at every pore, to be convinced how terrible would be the calamities which would attend a warfare in the bosom of our country, with the cruel and rapacious hordes of France.

May the benignity of Heaven avert from us calamities so dreadful !—May we remain, as heretofore, a free, a favoured and a happy people !

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APPENDIX.

Note to page 25.

THE military system of the Romans is better known than that of any other ancient people. All the institutions of that warlike and ambitious republic were predicated on the idea of universal conquest ; but in the mode of raising its armies that project was more especially discernible. The ambitious views of the Romans could not be accomplished without placing at the disposal of the government the whole military population of the country ; and hence their unnecessary perseverance in the system of compulsive levy—a system absolutely incompatible (as practised by them) with that liberty which they flattered themselves they enjoyed—with that liberty whose name so often resounded through the forum and the capitol, in the turbulent harangues of the Gracchi, and in the elegant declamations of Cicero, with that liberty

which was heard of every where, but existed no where.

The Roman consuls were entrusted with the power of determining annually the number of men which should be levied at home, and the number which should be furnished by the Italian states, which, in the time of the republic, were nominally allied, but really subjected to, Rome. When the number had been determined on, the consuls communicated their orders to the magistrates of the municipal towns, and issued an edict at Rome, appointing a day for the levy or conscription. On the appointed day the citizens assembled at the capitol:—the order, in which the tribes should stand the selection, was then determined by lot. The tribe allotted for the first selection divided itself into its proper centuries, from each of which, in its turn, the military tribunes selected, man by man, a number proportioned to that of the century. After a selection had thus been made from the first tribe, the rest succeeded in the allotted order, and the same process was gone through with each. The persons thus arbitrarily selected by the tribunes, were compelled to serve in armies of the republic, and if they proved refractory, were punished, at the discretion of the consul, with stripes, fine or imprisonment.

Every citizen, between the ages of seventeen and fifty,* was liable to this selection or conscription, except,

1. Those who held civil or sacred offices which they could not conveniently relinquish :

2. Those who had already served through twenty campaigns :

3. Those who had been exempted from liability to the conscription on account of extraordinary merit : and

4. Those who laboured under physical disabilities.

These were the regulations which governed the levy of the Roman infantry, until the time of Marius, who, during the anarchy produced by his contest with Sylla, introduced into the Roman legions all the rabble of Italy, and all the fugitives from the provinces.

The cavalry of the Roman army, at the same calamitous period, was composed exclusively of knights (esquires.) Romulus, after forming a senate of an hundred venerable old men, selected for their wisdom and probity, laid the foundation of another order in the state, by choosing three hundred of the bravest and most reputable

* Livy, a Roman, states the liability to the conscription to have continued from the age of 17, to that of 50. XLII. 33
34. Polybius, a Greek, says that the liability extended to 46 only. VI. 17. I prefer the authority of the former.

of the youth, to serve as horsemen. The number of these knights was considerably augmented by Servius Tullius, who, when he instituted the census, ordained that every plebian citizen of irreproachable morals, and possessed of an estate of four hundred *sestertia*, should be enrolled in the equestrian order. Each Roman knight received from the government, at the time of his installation, a gold ring and an horse, after which he was bound to perform military service, whenever called upon by the state.

FINIS.

The reader is requested to correct the following

ERRATA.

Page 13, line 1, for *tax* read *lax*.—p. 18, l. 1, for *the* read *be*.—p. 20, l. 2 fr. bottom, for *these* read *their*.—p. 21, l. 5, for *incomparatively* read *incomparably*.—p. 31, l. 5, insert *in* before *solidum*.—p. 34, l. 4 fr. bottom, for *paine* read *peine*.—p. 44, l. 3, for *much* read *must*.—p. 53, l. 23, for *proclaimed* read *proclaiming*.—p. 59, l. 3 fr. bottom for *promærium* read *pomærium*.—p. 80, l. 7 fr. bottom, for *obstruct* read *obstructs*.—p. 88, l. 14, for *factitious* read *factionous*, and l. 9 fr. bottom, for *filthy* read *pithy*.—p. 89, l. 1, for *conceit* read *concert*.—p. 90, last l. for *banners* read *barriers*.

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